

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, UNSC, LT, SF
SUBJECT: SECURITY COUNCIL: LESOTHO COMPLAINT AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA

REF: A. USUN 6292 (NOTAL, B. GABORONE 2343 (NOTAL),

1. CHARGE WAS CALLED TO FONMIN WEDNESDAY MORNING AND WAS RECEIVED BY ACTING FONMIN SEKHONYANA (FINANCE) AND MINISTER TO PM LEHLOENYA. (SEKHONYANA ALSO ACTING FOR PM WHO OUT OF TOUCH ON ISOLATED MOUNTAIN VACATION.) SEKHONYANA ADDRESSED SUBJECT OF LESOTHO COMPLAINT AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA SAYING THAT GOL IS CONCERNED ABOUT "SEMANTIC PROBLEM" IN DISCUSSION OF LESOTHO BORDER SITUATION WITH TRANSKEI. HE SAID THE PROBLEM IS ONE OF DEFINING A SITUATION THAT LIES BETWEEN "CREATING DIFFICULTIES FOR LESOTHO" AND "BARRICADING THE GATES". SEKHONYANA CONCEDED BORDER POSTS ARE NOT BARRICADED AGAINST PASSAGE BUT INSISTED THAT BORDER PASSAGE IS NOT "NORMAL". HE DESCRIBED THE NIGGLING DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY BASOTHO INCLUDING THE REQUIREMENT TO PAY FIFTY

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CENT FEE FOR A VISA, THE LIMITATION OF VISAS FOR AS LITTLE AS TWO HOURS FOR SHOPPING PURPOSES, ETC.

2. SEKHONYANA SAID THE REAL PROBLEM IS "AS GOL HAS ALWAYS MAINTAINED, THE DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY MINERS". HE WAVED A MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR AT QUTHING AND READ

FROM IT LANGUAGE THAT INDICATED SEVERAL SCORE BASOTHO MINERS WHO HAD FILTERED THROUGH FROM QACHAS NEK WERE UNABLE TO TRANSIT THE TELLE BRIDGE INTO TRANSKEI AT THAT POINT. THE MINISTER ADDED THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN RAILWAY BUSES WHICH TRADITIONALLY HAVE PICKED UP THE GROUPS OF BASOTHO MINERS AT TELLE BRIDGE HAVE BEEN DENIED PASSAGE. HE INSISTED THAT MINERS AT QACHAS NEK ARE EXPERIENCING EXTRAORDINARY DIFFICULTY IN THAT SECTION 12 RESIDENCE/WORK PERMITS ARE NO LONGER AVAILABLE THERE, REQUIRING MINERS TO TRAVEL OVER BARELY PASSABLE TRACK TO QUTHING. TRANSKEI OFFICIALS AT QACHAS NEK, HE INSISTED FURTHER, ARE REFUSING PASSAGE TO IDENTIFIABLE MINERS BECAUSE OF LACK OF SECTION 12 PERMITS. HE ADMITTED POSSIBILITY OF MINERS INDIVIDUALLY OBTAINING VISAS FRAUDULENTLY TO TRANSIT TRANSKEI TO UMZIMKULU IN HOPE OF OBTAINING SECTION 12 PERMITS THERE BUT THIS IS FAR OUT OF THE WAY FOR TRAVEL TO MINES. FURTHER HE SAID TRADITIONAL RAIL ROUTE FROM MATATIELE NO LONGER IS OPEN TO MINERS SINCE TRAIN DOES NOT STOP AT RSA BORDER WHICH WOULD RESULT IN MINERS ARRIVING IN RSA WITHOUT REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION.

3. MINISTER SEKHONYANA SAID HE IS PREPARED, SHOULD USG DESIRE, TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR CHARGE INVESTIGATE THE SITUATION IN LOCO, TO ASK QUESTIONS, MAKE INQUIRIES AND TALK TO THE MINERS. I SAID I APPRECIATED THIS OFFER BUT THAT I WOULD RESERVE MY REPLY UNTIL I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONSULT MY GOVERNMENT.

4. THE MINISTER SUMMED UP THE SITUATION VIS-A-VIS TRANSKEI AS DELIVERATE PROVOCATION BY SOUTH AFRICA USING TRANSKEI BANTUSTAN AS ITS PROXY. HE SAID GOL IS CERTAIN THAT FUTURE DIFFICULTIES OF THE SAME NATURE LIE IN STORE WITH THE CREATION NEXT YEAR OF BAPHUTOTSWANA AND SUBSEQUENT CREATION OF QWA QWA. GOL BELIEVES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CREATION OF THESE BANTUSTANS ON LESOTHO BORDER IS IN PART AIMED AT COMPELLING LESOTHO TO MAINTAIN A COMPLIANT POSTURE VIS-A-VISA SOUTH AFRICA. AS TO THE AIM OF THE RESOLUTION NOW UNDER DISCUSSION SEKHONYANA SAID THAT, BEHOND THE CONDEMNATION OF SOUTH AFRICA, IT IS THE AIM OF HIS GOVERNMENT TO OBTAIN THE NECESSARY ASSISTANCE TO PERMIT LESOTHO TO CONSTRUCT THE INTERNAL ROAD CONNECTIONS THAT ARE NECESSARY TO PERMIT FREE MOVEMENT OF ITS PEOPLE IN THE FACE OF A DEVELOPING ADVERSE SITUATION ON ITS BORDERS. IT IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE HE EMPHASIZED FOR BASOTHO TO RELIE AS THEY TRADITIONALLY HAVE DONE ON PASSAGE THROUGH NEIGHBORING AREAS IN MOVING FROM ONE PART OF LESOTHO TO ANOTHER.

5. UK HIGH COMMISSIONER ALSO CALLED TO FONMIN THIS MORNING AND GIVEN THE SAME BASIC MESSAGE. UK HC REPORTS HIS GOVERNMENT WILL JOIN CONSENSUS IN SUPPORT AND MAKE STATEMENT SUPPORTING INTER-NATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR LESOTHO. HE SAID HMG HAS ALREADY FOLLOWED LEAD OF EC IN INCREASING ITS ASSISTANCE TO LESOTHO BY HALF-MILLION DOLLARS IN ORDER TO ASSIST IN FURTHER ROAD CONSTRUCTION.

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